Legislation on Banning The Sex Determination Test

196. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1500 given in the Rajya Sabha on 19th November, 1986 and state:

(a) whether government have since examined the matter regarding conducting of aminocentesis tests for determination of the sex of foetus from technical, legal and public education points of view;

(b) if so, what are the details of the study made and the decisions taken in regard thereto; and

(c) whether Government propose to bring a legislation in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A meeting on sex Determination test and Amniocentesis was held on 19-12-86 in New Delhi which was attended by renowned Social Women Organisations, Women Activists, Medical Professionals and Jurists. There was consensus of the opinion of members that these tests should be banned in the private sector organisations like Nursing Homes and clinics etc. and these should be limited to selected Government research institutions and hospitals to be licensed for the same. The meeting also recommended that there should be a comprehensive legislation having in-built mechanism for an infrastructure for implementation of the legislation effectively.

(c) A committee has been constituted which will go into this question in detail.

Basic Passenger Amenities Provided by Railways

197. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite various measures taken by Government, the basic amenities provided to the travelling public are lacking, the conditions of the coaches, cleanliness of the compartments and the quality of food supplied has been deteriorating and that there have been persistent complaints by the passengers on this account;

(b) if so, what is the machinery responsible for providing and looking after the basic amenities for the railway passengers and for the maintenance of coaches stating the periodicity of its checks to remove the deficiencies wherever noticed;

(c) what is the role of the Zonal Railway Councils in this regard and whether Government have reviewed their working to assess their utility, if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what remedial measures are proposed to be taken by Government to improve the overall performance of the railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) The basic amenities for travelling public are being fully catered for; the condition of coaches is generally satisfactory, cleanliness of compartments assured and quality of food supplied good.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The role of Zonal Council is to provide a liaison agency and a permanent communication channel between the user|public and Indian Railways. The forum is used for bringing out Railways' shortcomings in regard to passenger amenities, services offered and removal of other public grievances. These Councils have been found useful.

(d) Constant efforts are made to improve the overall performance of Railways, specially provision of passenger amenities and other user amenities. Exclusive budgetary provision of Rs. 9 crores was made in 1986-87. Some of the steps taken to improve the overall performance of the Railways in this area are given in the endorsed statement.

Statement

Some of the Steps taken to improve the overall performance of the Railways

1. To improve cleanliness of bath rooms, high pressure water jets at terminals and enroute have been introduced.

2. Water tank capacity of each lavatory on broad gauge has been increased from 318 litres to 455 litres and on metre gauge from 960 litres to 1206 litres per coach.

3. In the next three years, all wooden seats in II class coaches will be converted to cushion type on long distance trains.

4. Drinking water facilities have been provided on all long distance trains and stations.

5. Mobile train cleaning staff has been provided on long distance trains during day journeys.

6. To reduce overcrowding and to provide greater travelling comfort, First Class coaches are being replaced with IInd A.C. Sleepers.

7. Vestibuing is being progressively introduced on important trains for the convenience of passengers.

8. Additional water coolers are being provided at Railway stations. 124 more stations were electrified during 1984-85. 141 beds in retiring rooms and 70 beds in dormitories were added in 1984-85. Additional retiring room facilities are being continuously provided.

9. A regular schedule of platform cleanliness, toilet cleanliness at stations has been catered for.

10. Improved arrangements for reservations, including computerisation, are in the process of being introduced or have been introduced.

11. With a view to improve food quality and hygiene, serving of hot food in dispesable aluminium casseroles has been introduced on selected trains in consultation with I.T.D.C.

12. With a view to provide clean and neat accommodation, Railway Yatri Niwas at New Delhi Railway Station has been started and if found successful, will be introduced elsewhere.

13. To wipe out the overaged coach arrears, a new Rail Coach Factory is being constructed and will be brought on stream by the end of the Seventh Plan.

14. Modernisation of base kitchens.

15. Periodic review of Catering Contractors' performance.

16. Replacement of 24 Volt battery system with End on and Mid on Generation system.

17. Replacement of dynamos with alternators.

18. Replacement of 2" dynamo belts with 4" belts.

Vaccine for Japanese encephalities

198. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA:

SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any vaccine against Japanese encephalities (brain fever) has been developed so far in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the progress of the research in developing such a vaccine?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) and (b) A mouse brain vaccine against Japanese Encephalitis has been developed by the Central Research Institute, Kasauli with Japanese assistance. The vaccine has been successfully standardised and freeze dried. It will be available for use after completion of the final quality control tests and evaluation of its safety and efficacy in field conditions.

Studies are also being carried out at the National Institute of Virology, Pune using an indigenous strain.

(c) Does not arise.